

## OPPOSITION TO SOVIET SCHEMES

of Khorasan. According to the Anglo-Soviet agreement of 1942, Meshed was to be in a neutral zone, but in fact it was occupied by the Red Army. Khorasan thus faced the same troubles from Soviet occupation as did other northern provinces. The sovereign's journey into this "forbidden area" was, therefore, a rather daring exploit. The trip certainly did not please the Soviet authorities, who were persistently trying to lower the prestige of the traditional institutions among the populace. Yet an outright refusal of the Shah to travel through this territory could only be of doubtful value. News of it would have reverberated throughout the country, causing much indignation. Moreover, Meshed is a holy city of pilgrimages and the site of the tomb of one of the Shiite Imams as well. Therefore, a journey to it had not only an administrative but also a religious character. And, as we have pointed out earlier, Soviet propaganda tried to create a favorable impression with regard to religious tolerance in the Soviet Union. The third journey was undertaken in the summer of 1944. The Shah then visited Shiraz and again passed through Isfahan, which for the second time was a scene of grave disorders provoked by the Tudeh.

The Shah also made efforts to gain more influence with the administration. Until the winter of 1942-1943 no special machinery for maintaining liaison between the Court and the cabinet existed. Ceremonious functions were taken care of by the Chief of Protocol, Mohammed Bahador, who combined his duties in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with those of master of ceremonies at the Court. Upon his death toward the end of 1942, however, a new position or

Minister of the Court was created. It was entrusted to Hosein Ala, former diplomat and Governor of the Bank-i-Melli Iran. Ala rapidly asserted himself as an important personage in public life. Furthermore, a faithful servant of the crown, Ibrahim Zand, former Controller of Royal Palaces, was entrusted with the portfolio of War in December, 1943. Through these appointments the Shah was reputed to have secured personal influence both in the government and the army.

Perhaps the weakest link of the Court was with public opinion. Whereas scores of newspapers worked for the Soviet or British cause, one paper only could be described as a mouthpiece of the Court, This